

Avner said was among "the most brutal" Israel had received from the US.

"I wish to express my profound disappointment of Israel's attitude over the course of the negotiations," Ford wrote. "You know the importance I have attached to the US efforts to reach an agreement. Kissinger's mission, encouraged by your government, expresses vital US interests in the region. Failure of the negotiations will have a far-reaching impact on the region and our relation. I have therefore instructed that a reassessment be made of US policy in the region, including our relations with Israel with the aim of reassuring that our overall American interests are protected."

Within six months, Kissinger succeeded in brokering an interim accord between Rabin and Egyptian president Anwar Sadat whereby Israel agreed to pull back its forces out of the Jidda and Mitla passes but retained the heights above them while American forces were stationed in the passes.

Avner said that since that compromise was reached, no Israeli has been killed on the Israel-Egypt border.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CAPITO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEMOCRATIC SMALL BUSINESS AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Mrs. DAHLKEMPER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, I look forward tonight in this next hour to discuss the Democratic small business agenda, one that I believe will really help to bring our country further out of the recession that we are now climbing out of. I am glad that some of my colleagues are able to join me tonight as we talk about this agenda going forward.

As our country struggles to overcome the effects of the financial crisis and economic recession, we must look for innovative ways to help create new jobs and foster private sector growth. We must act aggressively to counter

the job losses of the past 2 years. And those job losses have been great. More than 8 million jobs have been lost since the recession began in late 2007. Our Nation's unemployment rate is near 10 percent, and in many areas well above 10 percent. Job losses are on the decline, which is good news amidst so many months of recession, but we still have a very long way to go.

The number of long-term unemployed individuals in the United States is extremely high, totaling 6.1 million people as of last month. That is 6.1 million people who have been out of work for 27 weeks or longer. That is nearly 7 months of unemployment. And approximately 2.5 million people are considered marginally attached to the labor force, meaning they want work, but because the job market is so uninviting they have not looked for work in the last 4 weeks.

One of our Nation's greatest historical strengths has always been our optimism. But when faced with a long-term, gradual recovery, as we are today, it is understandable that patience wanes and it becomes difficult to retain the optimism that has served us so well in the past. That is why we must act aggressively and decisively to help our private sector grow and create jobs.

I believe the best place to start is the area of our economy that has the greatest record of success in creating jobs, and that is our small business sector. As a former small business owner—my husband is still running the business—I have seen firsthand the power of small businesses in our communities. A grocery store can transform an urban landscape, improve the health and lower crime in neighborhoods that others may have thought was a lost cause. A retail store or restaurant can energize a community by drawing patrons to lesser traveled areas. A small business can turn an empty street into a destination for customers and tourists. Manufacturers and producers can create hubs of commerce and employment when the jobs they create directly beget indirect jobs.

□ 1845

Manufacturers need supplies and equipment to create their products, and their workers need a place to eat lunch and to shop.

When small businesses grow and prosper, their communities reap the benefits. Small businesses are the engine of economic growth and job creation in the United States, and they've been for years. Over the last 15 years, small businesses have created over 65 percent of the Nation's new jobs, approximately 14.5 million jobs. Small businesses represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms. That means less than 1 percent of our employers are big corporations.

Small businesses are the starting point for economic success. The small businesses of today are the success stories of tomorrow. It's small businesses

that create the technologies that profoundly affect our lives and our culture—medical devices that regulate heartbeats, software that allows us to connect with people across the globe, products that rid our ground water of arsenic. These are just a few of the examples of innovations of small businesses.

The American entrepreneurial spirit will help drive our economy out of recession, creating jobs in innovation along the way. That is why we must do all we can to help businesses, small businesses, grow and prosper.

I would now like to yield to my good friend, Mr. TONKO from New York.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you for bringing us together this evening for this discussion on the small business agenda here in Washington.

Obviously, as has been stated so many times during this session of Congress, the number one priority is jobs, jobs, jobs, and jobs. We cannot overemphasize the impact that job creation, job retention bears on the discussions that we have here in restoring this Nation's economy.

And you make a very valid point in assessing the very deep loss of jobs that we experienced at the beginning of this administration. It was somewhere in the neighborhood of 700,000 to 750,000 jobs lost per month in the last 3 or 4 months before the Obama administration began its work here in Washington. That was a tremendous loss to this Nation's economy. Millions upon millions, 7 to 8 million jobs lost during this recession. A very painful blow to the American economy and certainly to the American households across this Nation.

And as we look forward to progress to inspire us, it is good to note that while it's not good enough, some 200,000 to 300,000 jobs lost in the last few months is a vastly improved outcome, a long way to go, but moving in the right direction. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act enabled us to place down payments in small business production and creation and retention. Certainly those efforts are coming in cutting-edge fashion where we're now addressing job growth in a way that speaks to research and development, allowing us to spark an innovation economy that enables us to respond in very valid terms by embracing our intellectual capacity as a Nation.

These are the source of efforts that require our investment. And I am so impressed that we can move forward now with many issues that were backburned.

When we look at the need to produce here locally in this country, to produce nationally for our energy needs, nothing could be smarter than to move forward with a clean energy economy, to be able to draw down that gluttonous dependency on fossil-based fuels that has fed this system, that has enabled us in a way to continue to add to that carbon footprint. And we're putting hundreds of billions of dollars per year